



The Aruba Reef Care Project is underway this weekend!!

As has been the custom for the past thirteen years, hundreds of volunteers will hit the beaches the first weekend in July to return them to their pristine state during the Aruba Reef Care Project. An event begun by Castro Perez of the Aruba Tourism Authority (ATA) more than a decade ago, it grew from an underwater reef clean-up performed by divers into an all out effort on the majority of Aruba's beaches from Palm Beach to Baby Beach.

This year's major sponsors are the ATA and RBTT Bank, which has been providing tee shirts and certificates annually for some time now. Other community minded sponsors provide meals, beverages, trash bags and communication aside from funds include SETAR, N.V., Aruba's National Telecommunications Company. The Renaissance, Radisson, Amsterdam Manor, Marriott, Manchebo, Divi and Divi Phoenix, and Hyatt Resorts, joined by Tierra del Sol Country Club and Golf Course are providing financial and material support. Dive and activity operators contributing and participating in the Aruba Reef Care Project are De Palm Tours, Red Sail Sports, Atlantis Submarine, Ranco Daimari, and SEAruba Fly 'n Dive. Establishments also providing food, beverages or sponsorship are Aqua Grill, Ruinas del Mar, Moomba Beach, Texas de Brazil, Sunset Beach Bistro, The Old Cunucu House, Oduber Agency, Tropical Bottling, and Heineken Aruba. Trash collection and thousands of trash bags are being provided by Hoori NV, ECO Tech, Serlimar and DTI.

Castro Perez announced that this year he has over 400 volunteers ready to sweep out over the beaches on Saturday and Sunday morning, from 8:00 AM until noon, removing refuse and returning the island's greatest assets to the state in which they should always be. Fourteen groups have inscribed and the dive operators will clean the underwater areas from shallow with snorkelers, to the deeper sites. This year, because of the construction around the Hadicurari Center, the Neptali Henriquez Park, centrally located in Oranjestad will be the center of operations. In conjunction with the weekend's efforts, the ATA has also provided a commission consisting of students from the International School of Aruba, the EPI, Aruba's Vocational Training School, and members of the "Green Team" to lecture in Aruba's grammar and secondary schools about the importance of maintaining the environment.

There is a wonderful camaraderie amongst participants in the annual clean-up, proving that garbage collection can be fun! Participation is encouraged and welcome, and in the past a number of island visitors have taken part. There are all sorts of ways to get a tan in Aruba, so why not do something useful at the same time? The Reef Care Project is eminent, but those that would still like to participate can contact Castro Perez at the ATA office, telephone #582-3777 or by e-mail at c.perez@aruba.com, or j.maduro@aruba.com.